United Nations E/2017/NGO/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 June 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 5
High-level segment

Statement submitted by Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

17-09334 (E) 080617

Please recycle

Statement

The Company of the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission consist of approximately 20,000 members worldwide, who focus on service to persons living in poverty. Our experiences make us mindful of phenomena affecting persons throughout the economic spectrum which call for the urgent implementation of social protection in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1.

The World Bank estimates that 700 million, or 9.6 per cent of the world's population, may be living in poverty (on less than $1.90 per day). Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia are particularly hard hit by poverty.

Behind economic indicators and poverty data exist political, social, and cultural obstacles which further leave certain people behind. Such groups, according to the United Nations Human Development Report (2016), include women and girls, indigenous persons, rural dwellers, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and migrants and refugees, among others. (Economic measurements of development and progress do not fully capture their plight. Thus, we encourage the creation of new measuring tools which include other factors such as wellbeing and human rights protection).

A more recent group facing poverty is that of persons losing jobs due to a significant evolution in the work arena. Some say we are facing a "tsunami" of disruption in the labour world as manufacturing jobs evaporate due to automation, artificial intelligence, and robotics. An increase in on-line shopping is costing further jobs in retail.

According to the World Economic Forum (January 2016), The Fourth Industrial Revolution, combined with other socio-economic and demographic changes, will transform labour markets in the next five years, leading to a net loss of over 5 million jobs in 15 major developed and emerging economies. Again, social protection is called for by way of proactive upskilling for contemporary jobs.

Oxfam informs us that eight men's wealth is equivalent to that of 3.6 billion people and that $60 billion annually would end global poverty. Yet poverty is prevalent among us and 1 in 10 people still earns less than $2 a day. These statistics emphasize widening income inequality and highlight the need for social protection.

In light of the above, we call upon United Nations member states to:

- Provide social protection for child and elder care, care for persons with disabilities, old age pensions, and income stability
- Include persons at the grass roots in deciding best forms of social protection to suit their experience
- Increase funding and initiatives which would upskill workers for evolving jobs
- End tax breaks for the extremely wealthy
- More aggressively combat illicit financial flows
- Encourage corporations to promote social impact projects
- Include factors related to social well-being and human rights in determining national degrees of development and progress

If banks can be bailed out and 1.5 trillion spent on arms, then monies must be found to truly put people first.

17-09334